

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)  
Rangeland Focus Group**

**Minutes  
May 16, 2006**

**Attending:**

**RMAC:**

**Representing**

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
Henry Giacomini	California Farm Bureau Federation
Neil McDougald	California Cattlemen's Association
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CDF / RMAC Executive Secretary

**Also Attending:**

Noelle Cremers	Farm Bureau Federation
Ceci Dale-Cesmat	NRCS

**Items 1 and 2, Call to Order and Introductions:**

Mike Connor acted as Chairman on behalf of Chuck Pritchard who was unable to attend the May 16 meeting. Mr. Connor called the meeting to order and made introductions.

**Item 3, Review of the March 2006 Minutes:**

Mel Thompson along with comment from Jeff Stephens identified language in the minutes related to county planners and their accounting for storm runoff when approving plans for developments. The comments lead to a discussion by RMAC questioning the level of detail and format that is needed for an acceptable set of minutes for the RMAC. Ken Zimmerman suggested that the item be scheduled for the July meeting of the full RMAC. The other members agreed and Jeff Stephens stated that it will be placed on the July agenda for resolution. Other minor corrections were noted. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote with corrections.

**Item 4, Economic and Environmental Viability of California Range Lands – Values provided by the Range and Livestock Industry:**

Henry Giacomini recommended that this item be tabled until Chuck Pritchard is available for the next meeting. Clancy Dutra made a motion to table the item. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Item 5, Certified Range Manager (CRM) Program Review:**

Mike Connor opened discussion asking for comment from Neil McDougald and Noelle Cremers. Noelle Cremers stated that she had attended the Professional Forester's Examining Committee (PFEC) meeting where the CRM issue was discussed. Two advisory groups are planned; one for the CRM Program and one for CEQA issues and the use of Registered Professional Foresters and Arborists. They indicated that cross over information between these two groups is desired. Mike Stroud will sit on both groups for cross over. Noelle Cremers stated that the PFEC does not intend to go beyond "forested landscapes" with RPF requirements since the PFEC believes that they do not have this authority or the desire.

Mike Connor confirmed that a state exam administered by the SRM must be passed to be a certified CRM. The concern raised is that potential new regulations in the future that would require a CRM may result in added backlog for project approval if there is a shortage of CRMs in the state. The counter argument was made that if the State is to have a CRM program then it should be functional, as compared to the present situation.

Mike Connor gave a review of why this issue has become an important topic of discussion with RMAC and the PFEC; the case in point where the Certification Committee for SRM could not reach a conclusion on what is the definition of rangelands under the regulations. He sympathized with the need for a functional CRM Program and further expressed his desire that federal land managers would also become involved in the CRM Program.

Mike Connor stated that originally the "specialty" (SRM) was to define the program and originally the Department accepted this approach with the definition of rangelands being brush and grass lands. The current definition states "forested landscapes. Our proposal is that CDF adopt the SRM definition.

By way of group discussion RMAC concluded that if a landowner wishes to write a range management plan, and the land occurs within a forested landscape, then a CRM is required.

Mel Thompson noted two primary issues in his opinion: one being the 10% rule that makes the distinction between forested landscapes and rangelands, and the second separating the CRM from the forestry bureaucracy, and making the SRM

in charge of rangeland with a broader definition that includes oak woodland with more than 10% tree canopy.

Ceci Dale-Cesmat noted that there are individuals that do wish to be CRMs, and would take the test; however, the information needed to prepare has been lacking. NRCS, BLM, and USFS have new hires that also need certification but the information from SRM is not making its way to the field.

Henry Giacomini noted that the CRM test is presently weighted heavily towards academics, and does not account for ranchers with extensive experience in range management. These individuals are not inclined to become certified and new hires without the practical experience probably do not have the ability to write credible management plans. Mike Connor countered that there must be a method for ascertaining qualifications for CRM certification.

Neil McDougald advised that under the current regulatory structure the Forest practice Rules along with associated stocking standards would come into play if oak species were to be classified as commercial species; several attempts to classify oak woodland species as commercial have already occurred. If this were to happen his management for livestock production would conflict with the rules under Forest Practice Rules.

Noelle Cremers advised caution when modifying the existing program that results in an expansion of the program. A change that includes the oak woodland with less than 10% tree canopy would constitute an expansion along with potential expansion of regulation that impacts landowners.

Ken Zimmerman recommended that prior to RMAC taking action on the issue that the producer groups represented by RMAC must be consulted to determine their preferences on the issues. Neil McDougald stated that RMAC also needs a response to the letter sent to the PFEC before RMAC taking action.

Mike Connor summarized the possible recommendations from the Rangeland Focus group to the Full RMAC as being to wait for an answer from the PFEC, and that RMAC will consult with the producer groups to determine their interests on the issues prior to taking further action with the Board. He also recommended that RMAC take up a review of the SRM CRM Program for changes that would encourage increased participation. These recommendations received general acceptance by the Focus Group.

Mel Thompson pointed out that two opportunities are before RMAC: One is to redefine the 10% rule that exist in Board policy (30% for example), and second is expanding the authority or autonomy of the CRM Program.

RMAC discussed as a group the venue for accepting comment from the producer groups such as future meetings of the Cattlemen's and Wool Growers

Associations. Tracy Schohr advised that RMAC will be on the agenda at Cattlemen's. Mel Thompson advised that he will have an opportunity with Wool Grower's as well. This concluded discussion on agenda item 5.

**Item 6, Sacramento Area May 26, 2006 Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Tour:**

Ceci Dale-Cesmat briefed the RMAC on the Tour. Agency staff and legislators are the target audience.

**Item 7, Meeting Announcements/Current Events:**

Tabled for the next meeting of the Focus Group

**Item 8, New and Unfinished Business:**

Jeff Stephens distributed a letter provided by Eric Huff that states the historical position taken by PFEC on the CRM and forested landscapes. He also distributed a string of emails from other professionals that have examined and commented on the issue.

**Item 9, Public Comment:**

None

Meeting adjourned.